

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 150141

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CO, SNAR

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT CARTER RECEIVES CREDENTIALS FROM
COLOMBIAN AMBASSADOR BARCO

1. THE COLOMBIAN AMBASSADOR, BARCO, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE, DAUGHTER AND SON, PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS TO PRESIDENT CARTER ON JUNE 24. FOLLOWING AN EXCHANGE OF AMENITIES, PICTURE TAKING AND THE PRESIDENT'S THANKING MRS. BARCO FOR HER ASSISTANCE TO MRS. CARTER IN BOGOTA, THE PRESIDENT HELD A TEN MINUTE CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR. ALSO PRESENT WERE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY LUERS.

2. THE PRESIDENT OPENED WITH AN EXPRESSION OF WARM THANKS TO THE AMBASSADOR AND HIS WIFE FOR THEIR HELP WITH MRS. CARTER AND HIS THANKS TO PRESIDENT LOPEZ FOR THE WARM HOSPITALITY SHOWN MRS. CARTER DURING HER VISIT TO BOGOTA.
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HE SAID HE HAD A THOROUGH REPORT FROM MRS. CARTER ON THE CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT LOPEZ. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT HE HAD JUST THAT DAY WRITTEN A LETTER OF THANKS TO PRESIDENT LOPEZ FOR HIS KINDNESSES TO MRS. CARTER. THE PRESIDENT RECONFIRMED THE GREAT IMPORTANCE WE PLACE ON OUR TIES WITH COLOMBIA WITH WHICH WE SHARE SO MANY DEMOCRATIC VALUES.

3. THE PRESIDENT SAID HE WAS ALSO PLEASED WITH PRESIDENT LOPEZ' RECEPTION OF PETER BOURNE AND MATHEA FALCO TWO DAYS BEFORE. HE SAID HE HAD RECEIVED A REPORT FROM DR. BOURNE ABOUT THE VISIT AND BELIEVED THAT NOW WE ARE LAUNCHED ON AN IMPORTANT AND PRODUCTIVE COURSE OF MORE INTENSE COOPERATION WITH COLOMBIA IN THE FIELD OF NARCOTICS CONTROL. THE PRESIDENT SAID HE HAD AN HOUR BRIEFING FROM DR. BOURNE AND MS. FALCO PRIOR TO THEIR TRIP TO COLOMBIA WHICH DEMONSTRATED HIS PERSONAL INTEREST IN THE PROGRAM. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT AT THE END OF THREE MONTHS, IF THE TYPE OF COOPERATION THAT PRESIDENT LOPEZ AND HE HOPED TO ESTABLISH WAS NOT FORTHCOMING HE HOPED TO HEAR FROM PRESIDENT LOPEZ.

4. AMBASSADOR BARCO THANKED THE PRESIDENT FOR HIS KIND WORDS AND AGREED THAT WE HAVE CLOSE AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS AS TWO DEMOCRACIES. HE STATED THAT THERE ARE PROBLEMS IN UNDERTAKING A FULL SCALE APPROACH TO NARCOTICS. THE PRESIDENT AGREED SAYING, OF COURSE, YOU HAVE PROBLEMS AS DOES THE UNITED STATES. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT HE REALIZES THAT A NUMBER OF PROBLEMS COLOMBIANS FACE ON NARCOTICS ARE CAUSED BY THE SITUATION IN THE UNITED STATES. AMBASSADOR BARCO SAID THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT WE UNDERTAKE TOGETHER A WAR ON DRUGS. HE SAID THAT HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO CONSIDER PLACING THE COLOMBIAN

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ARMY IN CHARGE OF OVERALL COORDINATION OF THE DRUG PROGRAM IN ORDER TO GET BETTER SUPERVISION AND RESPONSIBLE ACTION.

5. PRESIDENT CARTER THEN SAID THAT HE HOPED THAT THE AMBASSADOR WOULD INFORM HIM OF ANY INITIATIVES OR PROGRAMS THAT CAN BE DEVELOPED TO IMPROVE OUR ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS. HE ASKED THE AMBASSADOR IF ANY IDEAS OCCURRED TO HIM. AMBASSADOR BARCO, PROBABLY NOT FULLY APPRECIATING THE FACT THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS SEEKING TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT, RETURNED TO THE QUESTION OF NARCOTICS AND SAID THAT HE THOUGHT IT IMPORTANT THAT THE GOVERNMENTS OF COLOMBIA AND THE UNITED STATES UNDERTAKE A JOINT PROGRAM. HE SAID IT WAS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE WHETHER IT SHOULD BE DIRECTED PRIMARILY AT LABORATORIES OR DEAL WITH BROADER QUESTIONS, OF INTERDICTION. THE PRESIDENT SAID HE HOPED FOR BROAD COOPERATION AND DESCRIBED THE COOPERATION THAT HAD BEEN DEVELOPED WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF MEXICO TO ERADICATE HEROIN POPPIES AND THE SIMILAR EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION WITH THAILAND AND BURMA. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT THESE PROGRAMS SHOWED THE DEGREE TO WHICH GOVERNMENTS CAN REALLY WORK TOGETHER. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT HE WOULD BE TRAVELING TO EUROPE

BUT WILL BE BACK JULY 7 AND WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH MS.
FALCO AND OTHERS TO DISCUSS OUR PROGRAMS AND THE ROLE HE
CAN PLAY IN IMPROVING OUR COLLABORATION.

6. THE PRESIDENT SAID ONE OTHER MATTER THAT CONCERNED
HIM WAS THE NEED TO SEEK RELEASE OF PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER
STARR. HE SAID THIS WAS OF CONCERN TO US AND ALTHOUGH
RECOGNIZING THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF COLOMBIA HAS RESPONSI-
BILITY WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ANY IDEAS COLOMBIA MIGHT
HAVE ON HOW WE MIGHT BE OF ASSISTANCE. THE COLOMBIAN
AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT A KEY ELEMENT IS NOT TO TAKE
ACTIONS AGAINST THE KIDNAPPERS THAT COULD PRECIPITATE A
VIOLENT ACT AGAINST THE PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER. THIS PAR-
TICULAR TERRORIST GROUP HAS IN THE PAST UNDERTAKEN VIOLENT
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ACTS ON ANNIVERSARIES AND OTHER OCCASIONS AND THE IMPOR-
TANT THING IS NOT TO PROVOKE THEM INTO SUCH AN ACT BUT
ALLOW TIME TO PASS TO FIND THE BEST WAY TO BRING ABOUT THE
RELEASE. THE PRESIDENT RECOGNIZED THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED
BUT REITERATED HIS INTEREST IN HAVING ANY VIEWS FROM THE
COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT ON WHAT ROLE WE MIGHT PROPERLY PLAY
TO ASSIST IN ACHIEVING A SUCCESSFUL RELEASE.

7. THE PRESIDENT CLOSED BY SAYING THAT HE WANTED TO
ASSURE THE AMBASSADOR THAT ANY MATTERS THAT COME UP OF
IMPORTANCE IN U.S.-COLOMBIAN RELATIONS HE COULD REFER
DIRECTLY TO THE PRESIDENT TO DR. BRZEZINSKI OR OF COURSE
TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

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